

Oral history with 16 year old white male, War Creek, Kentucky (Transcription)

CAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN DIALECTS CASSETTE NO. 39 SIDE A The first excerpt is taken from original tape W 98.

Begin M20 A (1)

QUESTIONER: Do you have a girlfriend?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

Q: Here, here at school? In the same class?

R: Mm-mm.

Q: In a different grade, or just a different ...

R: No, she's in the same grade. She's not really my girlfriend, I just ...

Q: Just like her.

R: Yes, uh.

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Q: Well, what do the kids do, if they want to go out on a date or something? What can they do, what kind of recreation or entertainment?

R: Well, now when the ball games are going on, they always go to the ball games or go riding around. And most, in the summers and stuff, they go to the drive-ins.

Q: Do the kids your age sort of go out on dates or ...?

R: Mm-hmm.

Q: Do they have cars?

R: Yeah, the majority of them do.

Q: Do you have a car?

R: No, not all my own. But, we have three cars at home, I drives three.

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Q: Do you have your license and everthing?

R: Mm-hmm.

Q: What'd you do to your finger?

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R: I hurt it playing basketball.

Q: Are you on the team here?

R: Mm-mm. I'm too little!

Q: What do you mean? The guys have to be really tall to be on the team?

R: Well, I couldn't do any good, you know. Everybody'd be bigger than me.

Q: How tall are you?

R: Five-three.

Q: Are your brothers and sisters short, or are you the shortest one?

R: I'm taller than my sister's that at home, but any one of the rest of them are big. My two brothers are six-one and six-even, I think. But everybody in their family, well Daddy and my two brothers, we wait till we get about sixteen, then we start growing.

Q: How old are you now?

R: Sixteen. (laughs)

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Q: So you think maybe tomorrow morning you'll wake-up and you'll be six feet tall?

R: No! I have started growing, though. Last year I was just about four-eight or something.

Q: Really? Did that bother you?

R: Yeah. They call me a punk.

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Q: Who called you a punk?

R: Some boys bigger than me.

Q: Did you beat them up?

R: No! (laughs) They don't really mean it, they just, for fun.

Q: Does that bother you, even if they mean, you know, do it just for fun?

R: Mm-mm. Not unless they take it too far.

Q: Well, can you think of some, like, some things that your parents think about that maybe are different than what you think? You know, like long hair, or skirts, short skirts, or you

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know, different ideas towards religion. What are some of the differences between the way you feel about things and the way your parents feel?

R: My dad, he, he's still got his old-fashioned ways. You know, he don't like for me to go to ball games or nothing.

Q: How come?

R: He'd just say there wasn't no sense in it. That, he says they just got to, didn't, didn't do anything. When they were growing up. I guess he wants me to be that way.

Q: So what do you say? ()?

R: I get mad. (laughs)

Q: Do you fight?

R: With Daddy?

Q: Yes.

R: No. (laughs)

Q: Are you sort of scared of him? What would he do, like if

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he wanted to punish you? What would you do?

R: Wouldn't let me go anywhere.

Q: What about anything, does he think your hair's too long or anything?

R: Mm-mm.

Q: It doesn't matter, he have any objections to that?

R: Last year he did. I let it grow-out real long.

Q: What, down hair on your shoulders?

R: Mm-hmm.

Q: What'd he say?

R: He kept telling me to get it cut. I finally decided to get it cut in the summer, it was getting too hot for me. He didn't, really he didn't bother me that much, though. You know, I, he'd just say you're hair's getting too long, when are you going to get a hair-cut or something like that.

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Q: What about your mom?

R: She won't ever, I don't, she says that, what () and stuff, thinks we ought to be able to get out and do stuff like that. And she don't, she don't ever call me no liar.

Q: Well, do you think it's hard being the young, you know, young, youngest one in a family that large, or do you think it's better, you have a better deal than your older brother and sisters had?

R: I have a better deal. (laughs)

R: How, in what way?

Q: Well, when they were going to school, like they just got a little bit of money to spend every day, you know. And. well,

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most of the time they were lucky if they got a nickel or two. And I get a dollar a day.

Q: From your, from your parents. What do they, I mean, that sounds like a lot.

R: I get, well, see since they're all grown and everthing, it's not that bad. I get all kinds of new clothes, or anything I want, just about it.

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Q: Do you think, you know, because most of them are gone, it then that means your fo, your folks have more money? So they can give you more?

R: Yeah, and both of them's working. That helps out a whole lot. When Mommy's not working, we get, you know, we don't get as much because we have so many bills to pay and everything.

Q: What all, did your dad own any land, or...? I mean did he have a farm near where you are, or just a house?

R: Yeah, it's a farm. Well, not's really a farm, it's got a barn and everything. We've got two ponies. And we got some chickens and guineas and a duck. And some dogs and cats.

Q: Does your, so you don't like plant any crops or anything.

R: Yeah.

Q: You do? What kinds?

R: Corn and beans and peas and strawberries, potatoes.

Q: Well, if your dad and mom are both working, who has time to do all the hoeing and the ...?

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R: Sometimes I help after school or something. In the summer, we all get out and help. And, like, they work at night, both

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of them. Mommy gets in at two, he gets in at six. And they sleep till about twelve-thirty, and they get up and plant it or something.

Q: That's a hard schedule, isn't it? Aren't they tired?

R: Yeah, that makes them grouchy.

Q: What about, are your grandparents around? Are they still living?

R: One, one of my grandfathers is. He lives over in South Jackson.

Q: Does he, live there all his life?

R: No.

Q: Where did he used to live?

R: At Quicksand.

Q: (), isn't it?

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R: Mm-hmm.

Q: What about your, your family? I mean do you think, are there a lot of poor people around like that in the county?

R: Yeahg. A whole lot.

Q: And how do you sort of judge your own family? I mean you say that you might, is it middle, you know?

R: Yeah, it's middle.

Q: Do you see some of your neighbors who have a lot less than you do?

R: Yeah.

Q: What kind of things?

R: My next door neighbors, they're, well, their father, only job he has is he makes about sixty dollars a week and they're

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on food stamps and they got six kids. And, well, they get shoes and stuff that they need, but they don't have as much, you know, they just don't get what they want. They have

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to, something like they go out and buy it a little at a time. You know, like buy one person something this week, next week, everthing. And like, they don't buy them that often. They just have to wear those till they wear out. Not their clothes, but you know, shoes and stuff like that.

Q: Do you, are there a lot of people, kids here at school from poor families?

R: Well, there's not that many, really. There's about fifty, I'd say.

Q: Do you think that's because most of the kids from poor families drop-out of school, or just ...?

R: Yeah.

Q: What about your neighbor's kids? Do they go to school?

R: Yeah. They're not that old, though. The biggest one is in eighth grade.

Q: Why do you think kids drop out?

R: I don't know.

Q: Would you ever want to drop-out, or do you think you'd ...?

R: I have felt sometimes that I wanted to drop-out. Had too much work to do or something.

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Q: What would you do if you dropped-out?

R: I don't know.

Q: What do some of the kids that you see around you do?

R: I don't know.

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R: Down the road drinking and going-out.

Q: I thought () was a dry county. Where do they get their stuff--drive over to Hazzard?

R: Yeah, there are some people who bootleg, too.

Q: They make it, or they just...

R: No, they buy it, you know, and sell it. Some people around their home and everything. Not that close, though.

Q: Do they, I mean does the sheriff get after them? Do they know it?

R: The don't know.

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Q: Well, do they just go over and buy a bunch and then come back and sell it for more than they bought it for?

R: I think! (laughs) I guess that's about what they have to do to make any money.

Q: Are there still any people around who make their own, do you think? Anymore?

R: I don't know of anybody.

Q: I take it it used to be more of a common thing.

R: Yeah. My grandfather used to make it. Back when we were born he made it.

Q: Where did he hide his still?

R: In the smokehouse, I think.

Q: Did he make it to sell it, or just for himself?

R: Just for himself. He wasn't a real, you know, he didn't drink a whole lot of it. He just like, he like it before supper or something. Once a day or something like that.

Q: Do you think you'd ever, do you want to live in () county

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for, you know, after you go to college and stuff, if you go?

R: No.

Q: What do you think you'll do?

R: Probably go to Georgia.

Q: Why Georgia?

R: Because there's a lot of places to get a job and it has something to offer for children and family. It's a lot of things to do, you know. Around here, there's nothing but the drive-in and the ball game. That's why they got football, I think.

Q: Can you think of some of the teachers you've had that you just really didn't like? ()? I mean I'm not, I don't even know the people here, but other than those (). Can you think of some of those teachers who were really bad?

R: No.

Q: Are you saying that, or are you just, do you really believe it?

R: Yeah.

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Q: The first one.

R: Well, one I had, I didn't like her when I, you know, had her for a teacher, she worked us hard, but I didn't like it. And, but now I see what she was getting at 'cause what she taught us we had later and we needed it.

Q: Are there any, you know, people whose personalities you just didn't like? You know, because they just weren't good people? Well, just in general, what kind of thing don't you like in a person? I mean, what, what kind of people don't you like? It doesn't have to be any particular person, but just what don't